



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 August 2015

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to inform you that I will convene, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/308, an informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on the responsibility of States to protect their populations by preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The informal dialogue will take place on 8 September 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The informal dialogue will provide a forum for Member States to consider how to advance the principle of the responsibility to protect, including by taking concrete steps to accelerate implementation in accordance with the six priorities identified by the Secretary-General in his report A/69/981. It will also provide an opportunity for an exchange of views on how Member States can best address existing and emerging challenges, as well as clarifying and deepening the shared understanding of the responsibility to protect.

I am pleased to share with you an Information Note and a provisional programme for the informal interactive dialogue.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Sam K. Kutesa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

**General Assembly Informal Interactive Dialogue on
the Report of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect
A vital and enduring commitment: Implementing the responsibility to protect**

United Nations Headquarters, Trusteeship Council Chamber
8 September 2015 – New York

Information Note and Provisional programme

Background

Ten years ago at the 2005 World Summit¹, the General Assembly committed to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It further reaffirmed this role during its sixty-third session.² In keeping with these decisions, and building on previous meetings over the past decade, the General Assembly will hold its annual informal interactive dialogue on the responsibility to protect on 8 September 2015.

The Secretary-General has prepared seven reports on the responsibility to protect. The Secretary-General's 2009 report on "Implementing the responsibility to protect" (A/63/677) presented a comprehensive strategy to operationalise the principle based on three equal, mutually-reinforcing, and non-sequential pillars. Pillar I addresses how States can fulfil their primary responsibility to protect their populations, Pillar II outlines the collective responsibility of the international community to encourage and help States to meet their responsibility to protect, and Pillar III elaborates options for timely and decisive response. The General Assembly considered this strategy in an informal interactive dialogue on 23 July 2009 and in a formal debate on 23, 24, and 28 July 2009. Subsequent reports focused on early warning and assessment in 2010 (A/64/864), the role of regional and sub-regional arrangements in 2011 (A/65/877), timely and decisive response in 2012 (A/66/874), State responsibility and prevention in 2013 (A/67/929), and

¹ A/RES/60/1, paragraphs 138 and 139.

² A/RES/63/308.

international assistance and the responsibility to protect in 2014 (A/68/947). Each of these reports has been discussed by the General Assembly during an interactive informal dialogue on the responsibility to protect. Each of the previous dialogues has featured extensive participation by Member States, representatives of regional organisations, and civil society.

The 2015 report of the Secretary-General takes stock of ten years of efforts to advance the responsibility to protect. It reaffirms the enduring relevance of the principle, both as an expression of political commitment and as a guide for action to prevent and halt genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The report further assesses the range and impact of implementation efforts under each of the three pillars of the principle, including actions by States to ratify relevant legal instruments and build national resilience to atrocity crimes³; initiatives to assist States in fulfilling their primary responsibility to protect; and efforts by the international community to respond to protection crises. Based on an analysis of the progress achieved to date and key changes in the international landscape since 2005, the report proposes six core priorities to guide implementation of the responsibility to protect over the next decade: (i) signalling political commitment at the national, regional and global level to protect populations from atrocity crimes; (ii) elevating prevention as a core aspect of the responsibility to protect; (iii) clarifying and expanding options for timely and decisive response; (iv) addressing the risk of recurrence; (v) enhancing regional action to prevent and respond to atrocity crimes; and (vi) strengthening international networks dedicated to genocide prevention and the responsibility to protect.

In preparing the 2015 Secretary-General's report, the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect assembled a compendium of practice, based on inputs received from Member States, regional organizations and civil society. This compendium will serve as a public information resource on the implementation of all three pillars of the

³ The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect uses the term "atrocity crimes" to refer to the four acts specified in paragraph 138 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity are defined in international criminal law; ethnic cleansing, while not established as a distinct crime, includes acts that will regularly amount to one of the crimes, in particular genocide and crimes against humanity.

responsibility to protect. A preliminary pre-publication version of the compendium will be shared with Member States for further feedback and input. This additional information will be incorporated into first official version, which will be publicly released by early 2016. The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect expects to regularly update the compendium to reflect emerging practice.

The 8 September 2015 informal interactive dialogue will serve several purposes. First, it will provide a forum for Member States to consider how to best advance the principle of the responsibility to protect in practice, including by taking concrete steps to accelerate implementation in accordance with the six priorities identified by the Secretary-General. Second, it will provide an opportunity to exchange views on how Member States can best address existing and emerging challenges, including those relating to the impact of new technologies and posed by the commission of atrocity crimes by non-State armed groups. Third, the interactive nature of the dialogue will assist in clarifying and deepening the shared understanding of the responsibility to protect among Member States. It is expected that the Secretary-General, his Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, representatives of Member States, and civil society will speak at the dialogue.

Expected outcomes

The continued subjection of populations to atrocity crimes is a stark reminder of the urgent need for the General Assembly to continue its deliberation on how to prevent and respond to these acts. It is expected that Member States will share views how to best improve the international community's capacity to implement all three pillars of the responsibility to protect. In light of the ten-year anniversary of the 2005 World Summit, Member States may also wish to discuss how to reaffirm this vital and enduring commitment, in keeping with the Secretary-General's vision for the next decade of the responsibility to protect.

The dialogue is intended to facilitate discussion among the United Nations, Member States, regional and sub-regional organisations and civil society, and to emphasize the continued need for a determined and collective approach to protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as their incitement. It will also help to reaffirm the important role of the General Assembly in advancing the principle of the responsibility to protect.

Provisional programme

The informal, interactive dialogue will take place from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm on 8 September 2015 in the Trusteeship Chamber at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General will provide opening remarks. The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, who will serve as moderator for the dialogue, will then open the floor to delegates and other participants. Delegations are encouraged to engage in an open and interactive discussion. Delegations will be requested to limit their statements or interventions to a maximum of four minutes. A Vice-President of the General Assembly and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect will close the event with concluding remarks.

There will be an established list of speakers. To register, kindly send an email indicating the name of and the level of the speaker to the General Assembly Affairs Branch (212.963.5063) by 1:00 pm on 4 September 2015.

Civil society organisations interested in attending the event should register with osapg@un.org for a special events ticket. Organisations interested in speaking at the event should express this interest when registering to attend.